

TO: Administrative Entities/Grant Recipients

FROM: Jeffrey L. Golc, Deputy Commissioner
Field Operations/Program Development

DATE: February 25, 1999

SUBJECT: **DWD Communication 98-42**
Policy for Welfare-to-Work Participant Assessment and Service Strategy

RE: Welfare-to-Work Program

Purpose

Welfare-to-Work (WtW) clients shall be assessed in order to provide guidance and establish a basis for the development of a personalized strategy, called a Family Income Growth Plan, for moving from dependence upon public assistance to independence and self-sufficiency.

Indiana requires an objective assessment and individualized Family Income Growth (FIG) Plan for all participants enrolled in Welfare-to-Work services. The assessment (including work readiness, skills, prior work experience, employability, and support needs) should provide the rationale for the specified aspects of the Family Income Growth Plan. The FIG Plan is to be individually tailored to the background, needs, goals, and desires of the client.

Citation

20 CFR §645.220 & §645.225, and “Supplementary Information”
PRWORA of 1996 Section 408(b)(2)

Rescission

None

Content

A. Minimum Required Components of a WtW Assessment

“In order to maximize coordination and minimize duplication of effort, we urge the use of the TANF assessment to meet this requirement where feasible in order to avoid duplicative assessments and unnecessary use of WtW resources.” Federal Register, Vol. 62, No. 222, p. 61595

Staff working with WtW clients are strongly encouraged to use the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) assessment of clients wherever possible. Staff are advised to evaluate the TANF assessment, and to use their own judgments as to whether to supplement or update it. At a minimum the WtW assessment will include:

- Prior work experience;
- Time remaining on TANF;
- Basic skill levels and educational needs;
- Work readiness;
- Self-sufficiency wage levels;
- Supportive service needs (including child care and transportation); and
- Medical/dental/mental health needs.

When complete for WtW purposes the assessment may also be supplemented to include:

- Employment needs, desires, and interests;
- Day-to-day living needs;
- Social and basic life skills;
- Requirements of other government programs in which the client is participating;
- Family dynamics and support network; and
- Other areas identified in the assessment process.

A copy of the initial assessment is to be retained throughout the time the client is active in WtW activities. Updating the participant assessment shall be ongoing and continue throughout the participant's relationship with the Administrative Entity/Grant Recipient (AE/GR) and shall be used to monitor progress in the FIG Plan and to adapt it as deemed appropriate.

B. Family Income Growth (FIG) Plan

Each AE/GRs must develop with each WtW client a FIG Plan to guide the client from dependence to self-sufficiency. Staff working with WtW clients are strongly encouraged to base a client's FIG Plan upon the TANF individual responsibility plan, where possible, and also to take into account any JTPA assessment available. (WtW case managers are responsible to insure that there is no conflict between the FIG plan and the TANF individual responsibility plan.) Such a strategy or plan is federally required for each participant to be enrolled in any allowable WtW activity. (Statutory guidelines are given in section 408(b)(2) of the Act. The federal regulations (20 CFR §645.225) say "The operating entity must ensure that there is an individualized strategy for transition to unsubsidized employment in place for each participant.") As part of the locally developed WtW program, these written strategies must be designed to select appropriate services which will move participants toward long-term, full-time employment and self-sufficiency. While each FIG Plan must contain an employment goal (which may be broadly stated), AE/GRs may include the following, based on the client's circumstances and interests:

- Employment needs, desires, interests, and objectives;
- Personal goals/objectives and time frames;
- Client time limit for receiving TANF cash assistance;
- Specific training service (either job skills or life skills) to be received and the time frame;
- Specific support service to be provided;
- Schedules for future participant/case manager contacts;
- Organizations or individuals who are to deliver needed services;
- Skills to be obtained as a result of services, plans to measure those skills;
- Tasks and responsibilities of the participant;
- Financial strategies for funding planned activities;
- Signatures of case managers, participants, and others; and
- Other important items specific to the client's service strategy.

Just as assessment is an ongoing activity, so the individualized service should be reviewed on an ongoing basis; and the FIG plan, adapted for changes in circumstances. Local procedures should provide for the review and update of FIG plan documents. Also by local decision the assessment and FIG plan may be combined as a single case document.

Effective Date

July 1, 1998

Ending Date

On-going

Action

In order to complete and maintain a WtW assessment of WtW participants, Service Delivery Area's AE/GRs must:

1. Evaluate the TANF assessment of all WtW clients, where available;
2. Supplement the TANF assessment, as needed; and
3. Update the assessment on a regular basis to assure completeness and ongoing relevance.

Additionally, AE/GRs must also complete with each client, and update regularly a Family Income Growth Plan to serve as a map or blueprint guiding the WtW client's transition to self-sufficiency.

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